

of that assistance from on high, without which the divine word has so often repeated the warning that our labours will fail?

In extending the censure to the Poets, it is gratifying to meet an exception in the most elevated of all their tribe. Milton's consecrated genius might harmoniously have mingled with the angels that announced the Messiah to be come, or that, on the spot and at the moment of his departure, predicted his coming again; might have shamed to silence the muses of paganism; or softened the pains of a Christian martyr. Part of the poetical works of Young, those of Watts, and of Cowper, have placed them among the permanent benefactors of mankind; as owing to them there is a popular poetry in the true spirit of Christianity; a poetry which has imparted, and is destined to impart, the best sentiments to innumerable minds. Works of great poetical genius that should be thus faithful to true religion, might be regarded as trees by the side of that "river of the water of life," having in their fruit and foliage a virtue to contribute to "the healing of the nations." But on the supposition that there were a man sufficiently discerning, impartial, and indefatigable for a research throughout the general body of our poetical literature, it would be curious to see what kind of religious system, and what account of the state of man, as viewed under moral estimate, and in relation to the future destiny, would be afforded by a digested assemblage of all the most marked sentiments, supplied by the vast majority of the poets, for such a scheme of moral and religious doctrine. But if it would be exceedingly amusing to observe the process and the fantastic result, it would in the next place be very sad to consider, that these fallacies have been insinuated by the charms of poetry into countless thousands of minds, with a beguilement that has, first, diverted them from a serious attention to the gospel, then confirmed them in a habitual dislike of it, and finally operated to betray some of them to the doom which, beyond the grave, awaits the neglect or rejection of the religion of Christ.

You have probably seen Pope cited as a Christian poet, by some pious authors, whose anxiety to impress reluctant genius into an appearance of favouring Christianity, has ere-